

Not Executed at Tyburn July 1700

H. 115

The Confessions, Behaviour, and Dying Speeches, of the Criminals
that were Executed at Tyburn, on Saturday the 20th of
July, 1700.

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JOHN Sinnsen, Born in *Effex*, almost 40 Years old, Condemn'd for Felony and Burglary, confess himself Guilty upon his Tryal; and gave this particular Reason for afterwards, that he was so wearied with committing Iniquity, that he had lost all Relish of his present Life, and therefore desir'd to Live no longer. And indeed upon his Confession, he seem'd to have had Reason, if I may be allow'd to say so, having been as great an Offender as perhaps ever was. Drunkenness, Blasphemy, Lewdness, Robbery, Sacrilege, Murder, are the Crimes particularly he owned to be guilty of, and to have been Master in the Art of them. The three first he once thought essential to his Employment, as being a Soldier, but when he came to himself, he was of another Mind, as well he might. For Robbing, he gave this Account, that he had been Guilty of it oftner than he could remember, that he had broke open Houses, and Robb'd on the Highway, (particularly once when he with three more, last *Easter-Eve* was two Years, took from a Gentleman, a little beyond *Tyburn*, 500 *lances*) that he had frequently Robb'd Officers in *Flanders*, and the King's also, from whence he with his Companions conveyed more than once a 1000 *l.* together, in a Word, that he had committed to many Felonies and Burglaries in *England* and *Flanders*, as got him the Name of Captain of the Thieves in both Countries, particularly in the latter, where the City of *Ghent*, he affirmed, has been shut up twice in a fortnight's time to find him out, and when that was done, Irons were put about his Neck, his Back, his Arms, and his Legs, and he carried about the Town for a Show. For Sacrilege, he declared it was his frequent Custom to strip the Papists as they went to Mass at 5 in the Morning, that he and two more, with their Swords drawn, have Robb'd them at the very Altar, and then, when the Mass has been rais'd upon them, have run Laughing about the Altars, and desir'd them. That once particularly, he Robb'd *St. Peter's Church*, in the aforesaid City, of 1200 *l.* worth of Plate; a just return for its being an Asylum to him, tho' he stood Condemn'd for Murder. The Story thus, having kill'd a Man, he was Condemn'd for it, upon which breaking Jail, he fled to the aforesaid Church, where in 4 Days the Priests got him his Pardon, and then in a short time after, (having learnt the Avenues to the Plate) he committed the aforesaid Sacrilege, for which, upon suspicion being taken up, for want of proof, he was Acquitted. For Murder in the last place, he acknowledged, that he had kill'd 4 or 5 Men upon Quarrels, but never any of his Robberies. This is the Account he gave of each particular, adding moreover

that he was one of them who broke out of *Newgate* the last *Christmas*, being then c. 17 for a couple of Felonies. And that his right Name was *John Holiday*. Such a Scene of complicated Wickedness, will I presume, surprize the Reader; it may indeed be unparallel'd nor unuseful to him, if I set down here what pass betwixt us relating to this Adult. I told him, I thought in the first place, it was impossible that all this should be true, that he only spoke it to be call'd off: I wonder'd next, that being one of the Children of this World, he had not exerted so much Willom, as to take up whilst he was well, having several times got a great quantity of Money together. I then desir'd him to let the World know some particular ways, by which Thieves use to Rob Houses, that so the Honest Neighbour might stand upon his Guard. And in the last place, I assur'd him, that his Repentance could not be sincere, till he had discover'd all his Accomplishes, that so, they knowing they are discover'd, may make a Virtue of Necessity, and abandon their Wickedness. To all which he answer'd, That what he Confess was really true, that he had formerly made his Brags of it, but for 6 Weeks past, he was so far from that, that he was overwhelm'd with Shame and Confusion about it. That whatever he had got together by such unlawful means, he never had the power to make a right use of. That one particular way, by which Thieves do get into Houses, is by standing upon one another's Shoulders, to the number of 3, and then the uppermost scrambles into the Chamber, strikes a Light, and makes up his Bundle. That about Supper is generally the time, because then the Servants are giving their Attendance. Thus far he went without any Scruple, but when he came to the last thing, he made many Excuses, That he ought not to betray his Friends, &c. But upon representing, that it was really not to betray them, for it was for their true Interest, and the Welfare of his own Soul: He then discover'd both Men and Women, desiring them to beware, and become Wise and Sober in time. Would to God he himself had been so! Sure I am, if we may believe his own Words, never poor Creature more heartily desir'd it than he did, nor give greater Testimonies of his Contentment, under the Severity of Divine Providence. All his cry was, *his Soul*— and upon that I hope God has had Mercy.

II. George Giffe, Born in *Suffex*, about 45 Years of Age, Condemn'd for Felony and Burglary; Confess himself Guilty of the Felony but not of the Burglary. I represented to him the Necessity of an Ingenious and true Confession; that now was the time, not to give a Gosh or new Turn to his Story, which really it would not bear, but acknowledge it Sincerely, without any Trick or double

double Meaning, that for the matter of Fact the Court was fully satisfied of the Truth of it, and if it appear'd before God, that he was really Guilty of both, and yet persist to deny it with his dying Breath, by that means he would leave himself no room for Mercy in the other World. Notwithstanding this plain Dealing, he still persisted in his first Story, and gave the following Account of it. That it was true, he was found in the Shop with the things about him, which the Master of it upon his return home, owned to be his, but that he either broke open the Door, or came into the Shop with a Pick-lock-Key, or the like, he utterly denied: For, said he, *I found the Door ajar, and that gave me both Opportunity and Invitation to enter.* I could not but remark the improbability of such a Pretension, and I was confirm'd in my Opinion, when I found this very Person had the Confidence to assert farther, that truly for his part, he was drag'd into the Shop, and the Door was clos'd upon him by those that drew him in, and that was the Reason he was found there. I exhorted him to consider what he said, and not preclude his Eternal Felicity, by a Story so ridiculous and incredible, but no Arguments from first to last could alter him a Syllable. I then gave him the Scripture-Prospect of the next World, shew'd him the necessity of making his Peace with God before he Died, and that a particular Confession of all his Wickedness, was little enough for that purpose. This wrought him into Sobriety and Thinking, but it had no considerable Influence on a particular Confession. He acknowledged his Wickedness in general, that it had been the occasion of his being in *Newgate* once before, *But then* said he, *it was a malicious Prosecution in Man, tho' a just Judgment from God.* I had him recollect, and not conclude a general Confession would fit and prepare a Man for another World, where there were particular sins that render'd him obnoxious to the Divine Vengeance. All his Answer was, He had no other than common Crimes, which the Almighty knew, and that was sufficient; not but that he beg'd I would Pray for him, and give all comfortable Instruction to a Man in his Distress: For his part, (he said) he would so husband the short remainder of his Time, as to reach, if it were God's Will, Happiness and Joy hereafter, tho' he mist of both here. And indeed, this I must say of him, that bating his uncommon Extenuation of his Crime, and his unwillingness to Confess particulars, he behaved himself with that Seriousness at all times, and with that Devotion when in Chappel, that gave great Hopes of his Desire to change this for a better Life, tho' he took an untimely and shameful Death in the way to it.

III. *Jonathan Lane*, Born in *Norfolk*, Aged 22 Years; Condemn'd for Robbing *Simon Harcourt Esq;* on the High-way, Confess that and another Fact, committed on the same Day. Be-

ing ask'd what could prompt him to it? He answer'd, *It was not Want, the common Pretence of Robbers, but the result of a Drunken Frolick, and the effect of Satan's Insigation.* I observ'd, that the Sin was so much the greater, and therefore requir'd the greater Repentance: And at the same time desired him to Examine his own Heart, and bring all his Sins to remembrance. He reply'd, he did that, but for any particular Confession of them, there was no prevailing with him. For sometime he betrayed a sort of Distraction under his unhappy Circumstances. But being argued into a necessity of submitting to the Will of God, that the Body signified nothing, the Soul was all, that he might have Hope, that the Providence of God intended by this Temporal Death, to save him from the Eternal, provided he made a right use of it. This smooth'd his Brow, and compos'd his Mind, and put him upon Kneeling and Praying to his God, weeping for his Sins, and all other Methods, proper for a Person under the Sentence of Death.

Upon Saturday the 20th of July, 1700. *George Goffe*, *Jonathan Lane*, and *John Simpson*, were carried to *Tyburn* in a Cart. Being tied up, *Goffe*, upon request to Confess his Crime according to Truth, would not alter his former Story; neither would he meddle with any particular Discovery of his former Life; what he said was in general, He had been a very great Sinner, but he hop'd he was passing thro' the Merits of Christ, from this to a better Place. *Lane* acknowledged his Crime, and being urg'd to reveal what other Guilt lay upon his Conscience. After some Argument, he Confess he had committed two or three other Robberies besides those he had discover'd. I was sorry to hear this, hoping his Confession had been Real and Sincere before. *Simpson* seem'd very willing to Die, declaring he had rather do it, than venture himself into the World again, if that were possible. For then, he said, he might fall into the former Disorders, and so be undone for ever, but now he had some Hopes in his Death. They all behav'd themselves with great Seriousness and Devotion, joining in Prayer, and Praying unto God to the very last.

Guy Cook is respited from Execution for 10 Days, bearing Date from the 16th of July.

Thomas Castel, *Edward Special*, and *James Whimmarsh*, are also respited till his Majesties Pleasure be farther known.

This is all the Account I have to give of the Sessions.

R. Wykes, Ordinary.